Minutes

Meeting of Louisiana Emergency Response Network Board
Thursday, August 20, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

Held at:

Louisiana Emergency Response Network
7979 Independence Blvd., Suite 207
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Welcome/Introductions

The August 20, 2026 meeting of the Louisiana Emergency Response Network Board (LERN) was called to order at approximately 1:07 p.m. by Granville Morse, MD, Chair, presiding. The meeting was held pursuant to public notice, each member received notice, and notice was properly posted.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Amy Groves Lowe, LERN General Counsel, with the following results:

Members Present:
Granville A. Morse, III, MD, Chair
Deiadra J. Garrett, MD
Jeffrey E. Carter, MD
Vanessa de la Cruz, MD
Mr. Neal Fudge
Dan Carl Godbee, MD
Honorable Chance Henry
John D. Jones, MD, Immediate Past Chair
Eva Lamendola, OD
Omar Leonards, MD
Will Mosier, MD
Julette Saussy, MD
Michele Sutton, FACHE, Vice Chair
Representative Chrisopher Turner
Keith Van Meter, MD
Karen Wyble, DNP, MSN, MHA, MBA, RN, Treasurer
Bradley Harris

There were 17 board members present when the meeting began constituting a quorum.

Members Absent:
Senator Katrina Jackson-Andrews

Captain Philip Daniels
William Freeman, MD
Brandon J. Mauldin, MD
Honorable Brach Myers
Monica S. Nijoka, RN
Patrick Smith, MD
Porter Taylor, IV
Robert White, MD
Richard Zweifler, MD
Lance Stuke, MD

Staff Present:
Paige Hargrove, Executive Director
Chris Hector, Administrative Director
Yvette Legendre, LERN Regional Coordinator
Donice Fletcher, LERN Regional Coordinator
Justin Schleis, LERN Data Manager
Sarah Templet, LERN Regional Manager
Michael J. Sutherland, MD, Medical Director
Cassandra Woods, Chief Financial Officer

Contractors Present:
Rudy Gomez, SSA Consultants
Jason Allemand, Communication Center Supervisor

Call for Public Comment

Granville Morse asked for any public comment. No comments.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Michele Sutton and seconded by John Jones to approve the agenda as written. See Attachment A. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2026

A motion was made by Deiadra Garrett and seconded by Michele Sutton to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2026 Board meeting. See Attachment B. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Board Appointments

Granville Morse announced the new Board appointments as follows (see Attachment C):

William Freeman, MD, representing Louisiana State Medical Society;
Neal Fudge, representing GOHSEP;
Deiadra Garrett, MD, representing LSMS – Pediatric Surgery Specialty;
Brad Harris, NAEMT-P, representing LANREMT;
Lance Stuke, MD, FACS, representing LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans;
Porter Taylor, IV, representing Louisiana Ambulance Alliance;
Karen Wyble, DNP, representing Rural Hospital Coalition.

Ratification of Commission Members and Resignations

A motion was made by Deiadra Garrett and seconded by John Jones to accept the following resignations from and to approve the following appointments to the following regional commissions (see Attachment D):

Resignations

Will Freeman, MD – from Region 2 Commission;
Danielle Duplantis, MHA, BSN, RN, CEN – from Region 3 Commission;
Michael Nolan, RN – from Region 7 Commission.

Appointments

Kody Bliss, MD, MBA, FACEP, DABOM to Regional 3 Commission (representing American College of Emergency Physicians);
Leigh Terry, BA, RN, CEN to Region 3 Commission (representing Louisiana Emergency Nurse Association);
Blake Denley, MD to Region 5 Commission (representing American College of Emergency Physicians);
Shail Thanki, MD to Region 5 Commission (representing American Stroke Association);
Andrew Huelers, NRP to Region 5 Commission (representing Air Medical);
Jayden Decker, NRP to Region 5 Commission (representing LANREMT);
Katrina May, BSN, RN, CEN, TCRN to Region 7 Commission (representing Pediatric Trauma Center);
Andrew Smith, MD to Region 8 Commission (representing American College of Cardiology).

The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Executive Director Report

2025 LERN Trauma Registry Report

Paige Hargrove, Executive Director, provided the Board with a copy of the 2025 State Trauma Registry Report and discussed the contents. See Attachment E. No formal action taken by the board.

Act 8 and Current Fund Balance

Paige Hargrove presented the Board with information as to the current fund balance and which parishes have not yet made deposits into the fund. A discussion was held as to the best method to contact each parish to discuss compliance. Amy Groves Lowe informed the Board of two questions received from city/parish attorneys regarding the application and intent of the law. Ms. Lowe will contact those attorneys to answer their questions and report back to the Board at the next meeting. No formal action taken by the board.

2026 Strategic Goals Update

Paige Hargrove presented the Board with the LERN 2025-2027 Strategic Priorities with Annual Goals and discussed the contents. See Attachment F. No formal action taken by the board.

ESF Portal Changes

Chris Hector discussed several suggested changes to the ESF Portal including changing MRI to Advanced Imaging, adding a pediatric endovascular option and adding cardiogenic shock as an option for STEMI. No formal action taken by the board.

Trauma Update

Level 4 Trauma Center Next Steps

Michael Sutherland presented to the Board the most recent results of the Level 4 Trauma Center workgroup. Mr. Sutherland stated that the American College of surgeons finalized their criteria for Level 4 Trauma Centers last month. The workgroup surveyed state hospitals to gauge interest in Level 4 Trauma Centers, and the results were presented showing interest. Christopher Turner and Karen Wyble discussed the issue of funding. The Board discussed the need for the legislature to authorize designation of Level 4 centers in the LERN statute if adopted. No formal action taken by the Board.

Emergency Blood

Julette Saussy discussed issues pertaining to emergency blood. Michael Sutherland and Dan Godbee discussed the federal regulations and restrictions on blood banking. Dr. Sutherland recommended that trauma centers receive education on the blood bank regulations so that they have guidance on what to do when their resources are dropping or exhausted. Also recommended they know the emergency policies for receiving blood during disasters. Dr. Sutherland will discuss emergency blood with the trauma centers at the next TQIP Collaborative meeting. No formal action taken by the Board.

STEMI System

Workgroup Recommendations/Implementation of Cardiogenic Shock System

Paige Hargrove presented the workgroup recommendations pertaining to the board approved framework for the implementation of Cariogenic Shock System. See Attachment G. Specifically to require STEMI Receiving Centers to have a cardiogenic shock protocol. A motion to adopt the recommendation by the workgroup was made by Omar Leonards and seconded by Will Mosier. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative. A motion to allow a one-year grace period for hospitals to obtain certification for cardiogenic shock certification was made by Omar Leonards and seconded by Will Mosier. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative. A final motion to accept External Certifications from The Joint Commission (Comprehensive Cardiac Center, Comprehensive Heart Attack Center) and from The American College of Cardiology (Chest Pain Center with PCI and CV Shock and Chest Pain Center with PCI, Resuscitation, and CV Shock) as meeting the LERN Board criteria for a cardiogenic shock centers with the additional criteria, to one of these certifications, the hospital must have Impella 5.5 or VA ECMO was made by Karen Wyble and seconded by John Jones. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Share Algorithms

Paige Hargrove presented two proposed treatment algorithms for clinical use. See Attachment H. Discussion was held. Omar Leonards made several suggestions for revisions to the time listed as well as including more discretion for the provider in type of care. The document will undergo further revisions based on the comments of the Board. No formal action taken by the Board.

Badge Buddy

Paige Hargrove presented information to the Board on the workgroup progress on badge buddy. No formal action taken by the Board.

SANE Program/Mental Health Transfers

Granville Morse informed the Board of his meeting with LDH related to the development of SANE centers and whether LERN can assist their development of an organized SANE network. Dr. Morse clarified that this is in the early stages of discussion only, and there are issues with funding. Karen Wyble pointed out several challenges with mental health patients such as the fact that transports don't get paid unless patients go to a hospital and also that facilities can refuse a patient for various reasons. No formal action taken by the Board.

Regional Commission Update

Sarah Templet provided an overview to the Board of Regions 2, 4, and 5. See Attachment I. No formal action taken by the Board.

Budget

Paige Hargrove reviewed the budget status. See Attachment J. Ms. Hargrove discussed some concerns with future funding for the LERN Communications Center and recent conversations with LDH on this issue. No formal action was taken by the Board.

Paige Hargrove discussed the compensation for Medical Directors which is currently $125 an hour. SSA Consultants did a comparison of salaries and determined that an increase in hourly wage was appropriate. Ms. Hargrove noted that additional funding is available through the money collected by Act 194. A motion was made by Jeffrey Carter and seconded by John Jones to increase the hourly wage to Medical Directors to $200 per hour with Michael Sutherland agreeing to decrease his annual hours by 100 years a year. Karen Wyble noted that $200 an hour was still lower than many other states, and Jeffrey Carter also noted that the increase was still low compared to other benchmarks. Ms. Hargrove noted that the proposed increase would impact the budget by $110,500.00. The motion was approved after a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Granville Morris to adjourn the meeting and seconded by John Jones. The motion passed after unanimous vote in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 2;53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Groves Lowe

Amy Groves Lowe, General Counsel
Louisiana Emergency Response Board

Date: August 25, 2026

Board Chairman
Granville Morse, MD